



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
JANUARY 12, 2022**

APPROVED MINUTES

1) CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Donald Trinks, Deputy Mayor Lisa Rampulla Bress, Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke, Councilor James Dobler, Councilor Ronald Eleveld, Councilor Kristin Gluck Hoffman, Councilor Kenneth Smith, Councilor Jody Terranova, and Councilor Len Walker

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

William Pelkey, 133 Portman Street, stated that he is fully supportive of using the American Rescue Plan Act funds here in town. He'd like to see the town using the money for capital project items and items that may be on a wish list. He had a chance to go to a Windsor restaurant last week and he noticed that most of the staff had masks on. He was not sure if this was a mandate from the Town of Windsor or from somewhere else. He stated that he was told by the restaurant that a person from the Health Department had come to the business and were distributing some N95 masks. The business was left with the impression that masks were required and they would be in trouble if they did not use them. He said that misunderstandings happen but it seemed more like they were being 'brow beaten.' He is not sure if that was the case or not but he hopes that when the town does go out to businesses and interacts with them that they try to be as clear as possible so businesses can follow the rules.

Mayor Trinks reminded Mr. Pelkey that the town hall is a 'mask mandated' building. Masks must be worn when visiting.

3) OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIAL ALLOCATION OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING

Town Manager Souza said tonight's goal is to give a bit of context and the framework for a potential allocation plan for the Council's consideration. The final rule from the Treasury Department has been received. There have been changes, but to the benefit to municipalities regarding the flexibility of the use of the funds. Funds need to be committed by December 2024 and all funds related to capital must be expended as of December 2026.

Town Manager Souza went through the presentation regarding the American Rescue Plan Act and its potential uses.

Town Manager Souza stated that the allocation plan being put forth has roughly 60% of funds potentially allocated toward capital investment which comes to approximately \$5.1 million. There are also some strategic items such as the Broad Street Road Diet and the Wilson Gateway Park, along with other potential items, which comes to an approximate total of \$12.6 million. Town Manager Souza added that this evening we are looking to get overall direction on how to use these funds.

Mayor Trinks thanked the Town Manager and the staff for putting together the presentation.

Councilor Dobler had one concern about a possible financial cliff with some of the programs which were mentioned during the presentation. He doesn't mind taking on a program as long as 2-3 years down the road we have a choice to either fund it from town money or end it. The question is in regards to capital projects. Is there any projects from a bonding stand point that should get higher priority? If we were to bond out any of those would it be better to use federal money instead of town money down the road? Town Manager Souza replied that when we look at the projects, he would say that the heating and ventilation projects are ready to go this summer or the next construction season so we'd probably start with them. The Milo Peck HVAC project has been bid and is ready to go as well. The Broad Street Diet plan is under design right now. It is currently in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as using state or federal aid for funding. We do not have that project built into our local bonding costs. So, this will be a project that would have to compete at the state level for a grant. Perhaps putting money toward the road diet might be advantageous as it could be 4, 5 or 6 years before we can get a grant award. It could be both ways. He suggested that part of the capital funding be used to reduce our planned borrowing.

Councilor Dobler added that if we are going to use a portion of the money towards projects, let's do it in the most advantageous way.

Councilor Walker thanked Town Manager Souza and town staff for putting together this list that we can use for the federal grants. They're all wonderful programs but one in particular I must talk about is the Railroad Quiet Zone. He agreed with Councilor Dobler on prioritizing projects that will help to reduce the town's cost for bonding. He mentioned it's a good idea to help multi-family housing updates. As we are aware and the Town Manager mentioned, the CDBG grants help for individual private homes and not so much towards the multi-family units. He has had people call and ask about getting help.

Council Terranova asked about capital investment projects and if we are looking at that as in addition to what we would normally borrow for the year or instead of and reducing our borrowing overall for next year. We could do an increased number of projects or

would we borrow less money and have a lower budget next year. Town Manager Souza stated his thoughts were a combination. We have a robust CIP program that has been well thought out by previous Councils. We are still in a historically low interest rate in terms of borrowing at the municipal level. Mr. Bourke and I just met with our financial advisor yesterday to start looking at the spring bond issue. The interest rates are reasonably affordable when you look out over a 10 or 15 year period. There is a mix that we may want to take advantage of now. Interest rates in two to three years from now could be higher.

Councilor Terranova stated the Council should be thinking about using this as an opportunity to spend money without borrowing as well as spending money to bump up projects and borrow money now so it costs less in the long run. She stated she liked how the plan is laid out. She spoke with Deputy Mayor Bress about some ideas that would fit in some of the categories. Regarding Community Health and Wellness, we could also expand access to programs that we currently have by offering more scholarships through the Recreation Department or temporarily lowering costs just in the short-term. In regards to competitive economy or workforce development, we can offer something like the Citizen's Academy to kids as an offering of exposure and potential interest with careers in government.

Councilor Black-Burke wanted to reiterate that these dollars should be used to reduce the future tax burden on our community. Looking at the 'safe strong diverse neighborhoods housing rehab energy efficiency programs', could we also try to shore up programs that we already have in place like the roofing programs for families. Regarding the neighborhood enhancement projects, the Wilson Gateway project is a priority on her list.

Councilor Eleveld stated that he is more inclined to use funds that are one time funds for one time projects and not ongoing expenses. He agreed with the Capital Improvements program and thanked Town Manager Souza and staff for a great job on the presentation.

Deputy Mayor Bress thanked Town Manager Souza and staff for the presentation. She liked all the categories and felt like they will make an impact on our community. She was pleased to see the mental health clinician with the police department. She mentioned mentorship opportunities for high school students in terms of government opportunities. She would like to see mental health programs expanded to address all ages including seniors. She also would like to focus on an early childhood initiative other than just the Discovery Center. She would like to assist families with early childhood education by offering more seats in the preschool classes or offering more head start scholarships.

Councilor Smith echoed Councilor Black-Burke's comments on reducing tax liability. He supports housing rehabilitation and energy funds which could open up quality housing in Windsor. As far as the three enterprise funds that are slated for \$100,000 each, he would like a little more scrutiny into those organizations to see if we would want to continue to support those.

Mayor Trinks stated he'd like to use this once in a lifetime opportunity of cash coming into a municipality to do exactly what has been previously discussed which is to prepare our community for the financial cliff as we call it. He'd like, as we deliberate, to look towards using the cash properly with first regards to setting the town up financially for the next couple years. The next step might be to break the categories into different committees, but he is open to suggestions on moving forward.

Councilor Dobler commented on perception of the Town Council and asked Council to be cognizant of responses when citizens come up and ask what we did with all the money from the government.

Town Manager Souza spoke about a path moving forward. He suggested having the full Council meet in 3 or 4 weeks where we can provide more details and specifics to some of the questions this evening. This could also provide an opportunity for the community to comment.

Mayor Trinks agrees with Town Manager Souza that the full Council should meet in a few weeks.

Deputy Mayor Bress asked Town Manager Souza if the presentation they received tonight could be available on the town website for the public. Town Manager Souza stated that it will be posted on the website.

Councilor Dobler asked Town Manager Souza if he can also break down the different projects that would put us over that cliff where maybe we may need to start funding it if we want to continue the program and which ones are just one shot deals. Town Manager Souza stated yes, he will do that.

Councilor Black-Burke liked the idea of having the presentation on the website and commented to Town Manager Souza to also include where citizens could go to do more research on a particular project if they wanted. In addition, she requested the town include the different ways citizens can ask questions and receive a response from the town. Town Manager Souza stated that we can do all that with the help of Assistant Town Manager Colby and our IT staff.

Mayor Trinks is very appreciative to Town Manager Souza and staff. He was able to follow the information very well. Since special meetings don't have the public



attendance that regular meetings have, he would like to be sure people know what we talked about this evening and future plans. Town Manager Souza responded and stated the town can do that through email direct and via a couple other platforms.

Councilor Black-Burke announced that on Monday, January 17, the Archer Memorial Zion Church will hold their MLK presentation virtually.

4) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Eleveld, seconded by Deputy Mayor Bress to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Colby
Assistant Town Manager